

So on this day, I congratulate Dr. Banks on this momentous milestone in his company's history. My fellow colleagues, please join me in extending best wishes to Dr. Banks on 35 years of success and for another 35 years of success that surely will be approaching.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CHILD PREDATOR ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, media stories about sex crimes against children are presently being reported at an alarming rate in the United States. These crimes are also some of the most underreported of criminal acts. Last month in Colorado, an ex-convict for sexual assault of a child, a child predator, continued his dastardly deeds against kids and assaulted several children. This child molester was able to slither and sneak into a quiet Colorado community and prey on the innocent children because of registration loopholes in current law.

One of the victim's grandmothers said, "People have the right to know where sex offenders are living. The police should know. The public should know." We know the number one thing child predators desire is to remain anonymous. Those days are over. No longer can ex-convicts for child sexual assault move in and out of our neighborhoods without us knowing who they are. While some States have registration laws for convicted child predators, when those criminals move across State lines, they slip through the system.

We know that the recidivism rate of a convicted child molester is extremely high. When many leave the penitentiary, they continue their evil ways against our greatest natural resource, our children.

So today, Madam Speaker, I am introducing my first bill, the Child Predator Act of 2005, to hold these outlaws accountable and impose tougher sentences for child predators who reoffend. This act closes loopholes in the present law and places tools in the hands of parents who want to safeguard their children from these people. This legislation amends the Wetterling Act of 1994 in six ways.

First, the Child Predator Act defines the term "child predator" as a person who has been convicted of a sexual offense against a victim who is a minor if the offense is sexual in nature and the minor is 13 years of age or younger.

Second, child predators must report change of residence within 10 days of a move.

Third, the Child Predator Act requires community notification. Child predators would have to notify, at a minimum, schools, public housing and at least two media outlets such as newspapers, television stations or radio stations covering that community.

Fourth, child predators who knowingly fail to register would be charged with a Federal felony.

Fifth, the Child Predator Act would also mandate a national registration database. This would be available on a free access Internet Web site.

Finally, the Child Predator Act would require prominent designation of a convicted offender as a child predator.

The National Center For Missing and Exploited Children confirms that the sexual victimization of children is overwhelming in magnitude, yet largely unrecognized and underreported in the United States. Statistics reveal that one in five girls and one in 10 boys are sexually exploited before they reach adulthood. Less than 35 percent of those child sexual assaults are reported to authorities.

While through previous legislation we have significantly reduced the prevalence of this terrible and real nightmare to children, we must stay the course. We must remain ever vigilant and keep in this fight. Child predators, like their criminal counterparts in other arenas, are innovative. They stalk neighborhoods, playgrounds, Cub Scout dens, houses of worship, and as of late they exploit the Internet to target youngsters.

Madam Speaker, we must put child predators on notice and let them know once and for all that we will not tolerate this continuing victimization of children. I wish to extend an invitation for Members of this body to consider enlisting in the Victims Rights Caucus that I recently founded and cochair with the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. HARRIS).

During my 22 years as a felony court judge in Houston, Texas, I have seen scores of victims come through my courtroom. Ironically, as large a contingent that victims are, they are one of the most underrepresented groups in the United States. This session of Congress, in cooperation with my fellow representatives, I hope to change this.

We must always remember that victims do not choose to be victims. As L.H. Harrington of the President's task force on victims of crime once said, "Somewhere along the way, the criminal justice system began to serve lawyers, judges and defendants. Victims are treated with institutionalized disinterest. The neglect of crime victims is a national disgrace."

Madam Speaker, to be a victim is an unforgettable nightmare but to become a victim at the hands of the criminal justice system is an unforgivable travesty. The first duty of government is to protect its citizens. We as a people are not judged by the way we treat the rich, famous and influential but by the

way we treat the weak, the innocent, the children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NO DEMOCRACY IN THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, we have just concluded our legislative day. A number of incidences and legislative initiatives have been addressed that I would like to comment on in this opportunity that I have during this special order.

We just completed our discussion dealing with incapacitated persons. I do want to remind my colleagues that the issue is not to ignore the tragedy of the case in Florida, it is to recognize the broadness of the responsibility of the Members of the United States Congress. The point that I made earlier, that I wish to clarify, is that I too would not like to see this loss of life if there is some alternative. But I did suggest that because this legislation that has just passed the floor of the House would have had a better approach, which is to have a full hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary and other committees of jurisdiction, that the same relief could have been given to this distressed situation by offering a private relief bill.

The opposition noted that a private relief bill would take a long time through the legislative process. Let me remind my Republican colleagues who are in the majority that rules could have been waived to move a private relief bill forward expeditiously as quickly as any bill that we have just put on the floor. So it is certainly a misstatement for anyone to rise to the floor of the House and suggest that an action of a private relief bill could not have brought relief and that the party in question in Florida might be dead before that occurred when they know full well that this House is controlled by Republicans and if they desired to move a private relief bill forward quickly, it could have been done.

And then, Madam Speaker, I want to quickly comment on a bill that appeared before us in the Committee on the Judiciary where not one single Democratic amendment was accepted.

In fact, the Republican majority made it very clear that they had a perfect bill from the Senate and they really did not want to do anything in the Committee on the Judiciary. So when amendments were offered by Democrats to protect veterans, it was denied. When amendments were offered